



TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2012 8:15 PM

Present: John D. Leone, Moderator, James M. O'Connor- Asst. Moderator, Susan Elberger, Hugh McCrory, John L Worden III and also present Eric D. Helmuth

1) Meeting commenced at 8:24 PM, No prior minutes were presented.

2) Discussion of Warrant Articles for the Spring 2012 Annual Meeting:

a) ARTICLE 16 BYLAW AMENDMENT/TIME OF TOWN MEETING SESSIONS To see if the Town will vote to amend Title I, Article 1, Section 1, to change the time of Town Meeting from 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; or take any action related thereto. (Inserted by the Board of Selectmen)

Discussion began with concerns about members of Town Meeting who do not work locally and need time for dinner and family matters before coming to the meeting. Would an earlier start be combined with an earlier adjournment? Ms. Elberger raised the question of dwindling attendance and departure of many of those attending during the break. An alternative suggestion was made to discontinue the break time, which is at the discretion of the Moderator.

VOTE: No Action (5-0)

b) ARTICLE 20 BYLAW AMENDMENT/TIME LIMITS FOR TOWN MEETING SPEAKERS To see if the Town will vote to amend Title I, Article 1, Section 7(C), of the Town Bylaws ("Time Limits") to change maximum speaking time for Town Meeting debate; or take any action related thereto. (Inserted at the request of Carl Wagner and 10 registered voters)

The moderator reported that since the time clock was introduced, most speakers have reduced their speaking time to an average of five minutes already. He further commented that the request for additional time has almost always been granted by the

meeting members when brought to a vote. The committee thought that if reduced time limits were adopted, should there be a higher limit available to the warrant article presenters.

VOTE: No Action (4-1)

c) ARTICLE 21 BYLAW AMENDMENT/ELECTRONIC TOWN MEETING VOTING
To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Bylaws to provide for electronic voting at Town Meeting; or take any action related thereto. (Inserted at the request of Eric D. Helmuth and 10 registered voters)

Mr. Helmuth provided an introduction to the technology and described his vision for its use during Town Meeting. He informed that he requested the Board of Selectmen to vote "No Action" and that the article would be resubmitted at a future Town Meeting. Some of the advantages would be quick, accurate counts which could be entered as a public record, increasing community participation and dialog. Framingham, Wayland, Brookline and Chelmsford are in various stages of implementation of electronic voting.

VOTE: None taken

d) ARTICLE 22 ESTABLISH COMMITTEE TO STUDY ELECTRONIC VOTING FOR TOWN MEETING
To see if the Town will vote to establish a committee of Town Meeting to be appointed by the Moderator to study electronic voting for Town Meeting, determine a charge to the committee as to its responsibility and duties; or take any action related thereto. (Inserted at the request of Eric D. Helmut and 10 registered voters)

The composition and charge to the proposed study committee will be discussed at our next meeting.

VOTE: (5-0)

3) Next meeting: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted for your review,

James M. O'Connor
April 11, 2012